

Mr. TUDKI RAMANNA GOWDA added that *hulbanni* in malnad districts also be abolished as there were extensive lands there and the Forest Department was deriving income in many other ways from the malnad forests.

The SECOND MEMBER (Rajamantrapravina N. Madhava Rau) replied that the representation related to allowing cattle to graze freely in the State Forests. He wished to point out that forest areas were constituted only after forest settlement and calling for objections from the people concerned. Once they were constituted, it was essential to see that they were properly conserved. Free and unrestricted grazing would only result in denudation of forests. Therefore the admission of cattle into State forests had been regulated by levying a small fee per head. This fee could not at all be considered heavy as private owners would sometimes charge from Rs. 3 to Rs. 4 per head of cattle to allow them to graze in their fields. Although the revenue from *hulbanni* was small in individual areas, it amounted to as large a sum as Rs. 70,000 in the aggregate. Moreover, Government were under an obligation to maintain fodder reserves to meet the requirements of the agricultural stock in times of famine. In fact, during seasons of drought, cattle were allowed to graze freely in State forests. But, in normal times, when there were plenty of rains and the condition of the raiyats was not bad, it was not desirable to permit unrestricted and free grazing of cattle in the interests of proper conservation of forests. For these reasons, he regretted that the representation could not be accepted by the Government.

No. 10.—Grant of short term loans on the security of crops and facilities to combat the *koleroga* in malnad taluks.

Mr. TUDKI RAMANNA GOWDA, Tirthahalli Taluk.

Mr. TUDKI RAMANNA GOWDA prayed that, in view of the hardship experienced by the poor areca cultivators for want of men and money to effectively check the spread of *koleroga* in areca gardens and to save the produce from its havoc in time, a band of

trained men for administering *koleroga* medicines be employed in important centres of each malnad taluk for affording help to those in need and also that arrangements be made to issue short term loans on the security of standing crops. He added that the raiyats had no other securities to offer for getting loans as they had sold away even the little gold they had in the shape of ornaments. For want of finance, they had to sell the standing crops at very unfavourable rates. He requested the Government to grant loans to the planters on the security of their crop in the month of February and take them back in May.

The FIRST MEMBER (Rajamantrapravina S. P. Rajagopalachari) replied that loans could not be granted on the security of standing crops. It was also not possible for the Agricultural Department to maintain a squad of trained spraying coolies to meet the requirements of areca-growers. Sprayers and spraying materials were being issued on credit and no further help was practicable.

No. 40.—Buildings with play-grounds for the Maharani's Middle School, Mysore.

Dharmaparayani Srimathi ALAMMA and Srimathi R. KALYANAMMA, Women's Interest.

Dharmaparayani Srimathi ALAMMA prayed that, as the Maharani's Middle School, Mysore, was overcrowded and cramped for want of space and as classes sometimes were to be held in the open verandah, early measures be taken to provide a building with spacious play-grounds for the school.

The PRESIDENT replied that the matter would be considered.

GENERAL RESOLUTION.

Resolution No. 1.

Village Officers taking part in Politics.

Mr. C. N. NARASINGA RAO moved the following resolution :—

"This Assembly recommends to the Government of His Highness the Maharaja that the recent circular order passed by the Revenue Commissioner in respect of village officers taking

part in politics and in effect, placing restrictions and limitations on their freedom of action in this regard, be withdrawn inasmuch as the village officers, i.e., Patels and Shanbhogs are non-officials entitled to enjoy all the rights, liberties and privileges of citizenship."

He prefaced his remarks with the observation that it would have been well if the resolution had been taken up for discussion earlier in the day, because already the time was up, many members had left their seats and the attendance in the House was getting thin. In fact he was hesitating even to move the resolution. But, as the subject-matter of the resolution was an important one and a question of principle was involved in it, he had moved it.

Speaking on the subject-matter of the resolution, he said that sometime ago the Revenue Commissioner had issued a circular prohibiting the village officers (Shanbhogs and Patels) from taking part in Congress activities and directing the District Officers to watch the activities of these people. It seemed to the speaker that the chief reason for issuing such a circular was that the Congress activities in Mysore had increased during the last 7 or 8 months to a large extent; that as a result of it, there was an unprecedented political awakening in the masses; that everywhere, there was an agitation for the establishment of responsible government in the State on the ground that unless that was done the innumerable hardships the masses were labouring under would not be removed. Especially, the people in rural parts were faced with very many difficulties. Any amount of representation to the authorities had not resulted in tangible improvement in their conditions. So, with a view to focussing the attention of the public as well as of the authorities, the Congress began to hold meetings and educate the masses. Elections to the constitutional Houses and the local bodies intervened in the meanwhile. The Congress members began their electioneering campaign with a view to capturing most of the seats. A number of meetings also were held for this purpose. All these activities seemed to have displeased the Government, and they immediately adopted a repressive policy. They

began to look down upon the Congress movement. They considered their activities as subversive. But as repression on the part of the Government increased Congress influence also began to spread. Soon the Congress earned the confidence of the people. The number of their votaries increased and the people began to attend Congress meetings in larger numbers. Shanbhogs and patels also, like other men, began to participate in Congress meetings. But Government, for obvious reasons, wanted to prevent them from joining the Congress and participating in its activities. So they passed the prohibitory order under discussion. It had been stated in the order that mere attendance at a Congress meeting must be considered as sufficient justification for removal of the entire family *hak*. He could not appreciate the soundness of such an order. Patels and shanbhogs, like others, were eligible for membership in District Boards, Village Panchayats, Municipalities and even in the Representative Assembly. They had therefore the right to speak, as members of such bodies, on various matters pertaining to the administration. As a matter of fact, many members of the House who were shanbhogs and patels were participating in discussions in the House relating to the grant of responsible government and like matters. They were even entitled to criticise the several acts of the administration. While that was so, he was unable to comprehend why they should be prevented from expressing similar views on administrative matters in political bodies outside these constitutional bodies. Let alone actively participating, even attending or arranging a Congress meeting was considered sufficient for either suspension or dismissal or even the forfeiture of the entire *hak*. He felt that it was unjust to remove them from their offices merely for attending a Congress meeting. It looked to him that Government were going against the very principles they had themselves enunciated. On one side they gave the village officers the rights and privileges of becoming members of the constitutional bodies,

and on the other side, they prevented them from exercising their rights in other political bodies. There were any number of instances to bear out this charge. One Venkataswami Gowda, Patel of Pothenhalli Village, Goribidnur Taluk, simply attended a Congress meeting on 24th November 1937. Immediately he was directed by the revenue authorities to go over to Chikballapur and show cause why action should not be taken against him for arranging and taking part in a meeting at which Messrs. K. Chengalaya Reddy and other Congressites criticised the actions of the Government. So also, one Chudegowda, Patel of Bannikuppe, was suspended for having attended a Congress meeting. While the very same patels could discuss political matters in the Assembly and criticise also the several acts of the administration, the speaker did not know how they could be dealt with for similar activities elsewhere. Such restrictions prevented them from freely expressing their opinions and doing their duty by their constituencies in the constitutional bodies ultimately, because there was the pressure of official influence exercised over them by the authorities.

The whole question centred round the point whether these shanbhogs and patels were to be considered as Government servants or non-officials. He for one would say that they were non-officials though they were village officers. In fact, in the *sannads* granted to them, they had been designated as non-officials. It had also been stated there that the offices held by them were hereditary and that they had absolute rights and privileges just like any other non-officials. Again, when some time ago there was a suggestion in the Representative Assembly in regard to increasing the *potgi* of shanbhogs and patels, the Government had stated in their reply that the village officers were not Government servants and that the *potgi* given to them was only an honorarium for the Government work that was being done by them from time immemorial. So, even the Government had admitted that they were not

wholly their servants. While that was the case, he did not know why all on a sudden these village officers were considered as Government servants and disciplinary action was being taken against them. There did not appear to be any consistency in the Government's attitude in respect of this matter. Whatever the attitude of the Government in the past, he said that in view of the fact that all misunderstandings had been cleared away, that a compromise had been arrived at between the Government and the Congress, that the Congress had been recognized as a political body formed within the State, and a new era of peace had begun, it would be quite consistent on the part of Government and in keeping with the spirit of the compromise too, that they should rescind the orders of punishment meted out to certain patels and shanbhogs as was done in Madras, withdraw the circular in question and allow these village officers to enjoy their rights, privileges and liberties as any other citizens. In this connection, the speaker paid a glowing tribute for the meritorious services rendered by the shanbhogs and patels to the State from time immemorial and said that but for their services, Mysore could not have progressed so much. With these pleadings, he commended the resolution for the acceptance of the House.

MR. T. MADIAH GOWDA, in seconding the resolution, said that patels and shanbhogs formed an important limb of the body politic. On their punctual collections of revenues depended the smooth and efficient running of the administrative machinery. It was for this reason that in the past the Government had selected as village officers, persons who commanded respect and influence and wide knowledge of men and matters in their respective localities and entrusted them with the task of revenue collections. They and after them their descendants had all along been discharging their onerous duties satisfactorily. If the Government wished to give them salary instead of the *potgi*, as in the case of the regular Government servants, he was afraid that the sum total of it would be many

times more than what Government were paying to the civilians in service. The *potqi* was merely an honorarium. It did not cover even their personal wants. But they never minded the insufficiency of the *potqi* and went on discharging their responsible duties actuated by the one idea that they were given a status and honour by being designated by Government as "village officers." The speaker also admitted that there might be a few in their rank and file who might have behaved dishonestly and embezzled Government money. But their number was very small. On the whole, the shanbhogs and patels had earned the approbation of the Government for their valuable services. It was because of such approbation that they were enabled to discharge their duties satisfactorily. The moment they lost the respect, the influence and the confidence they enjoyed they would find it difficult to continue in those posts.

Proceeding, the speaker explained that of late, the Congress activities had permeated into the villages. The conviction had somehow come about in the people that unless responsible government was established in the State, many of their ills could not be remedied. In the British provinces which were being governed by popular ministries, already a number of ameliorative measures had been undertaken by them. Thinking that such measures could be undertaken in Mysore also if elected representatives were at the helm of affairs, the people began to sympathize with and support the Congress movement. And in common with the public feeling, the shanbhogs and patels also sympathized with the movement. They believed that they were non-officials, that they had been recognized as such, and that therefore they could exercise their rights and privileges as any other citizen could. But suddenly limitations had been placed upon them. Their rights had been curtailed. Consequently, he was afraid that the Government work in villages would suffer. The Government seemed to be interfering too much with their liberties. They discounted even their applying for leave. For

instance, Patel Lingegowda of Channapatna and others applied for 3 months leave on the ground that they could not discharge their duties properly owing to the fact that their friends Mr. V. Venkatappa and others were in jail. They could have mentioned other causes for their leave, but they were honest in giving out the truth. But, for that, they were dismissed and their hereditary *hak* was forfeited. The speaker asked whether there were not officials taking leave on even false pretexts, and if so, whether it was just on the part of the Government to so severely punish the patels for having spoken out the barest truth in applying for leave. The speaker thought that such peremptory action on the part of Government was unjust and beyond all reasonable proportions. Should these village officers attend the meetings, they would be accused of having gone there to take part in subversive movements and if they did not go there, they might be reprimanded for dereliction of duty. Either way they were likely to be punished. They were thus between the devil and the deep sea. In conclusion, he endorsed the mover's appeal that in the spirit of the recent compromise arrived at between the Government and the Congress, it was very desirable that the restrictions placed upon the freedom of action of patels and shanbhogs should be removed. any punishments meted out to them in this connection be cancelled and the circular in question be withdrawn.

Mr. Y. V. MUNISWAMI IYER, in opposing the resolution, stated that the *barabaluthi* system of village administration was introduced during the time of the Mogul Emperors and had continued to the present day while Government themselves in the interval had changed hands. He agreed that shanbhogs and patels were honourable people and commanded respect and influence in villages. They were the persons entrusted with the duties of collection of Government revenue and accounting for them. The Congress, realizing the key position which these village officers held, hit upon the plan of winning them over to their side and

advising them not to collect the land revenue and thus attempted to paralyse the administration. Many shanbhogs and patels fell easy victims to the machinations of the Congress. So, they began to take part in Congress activities. As the activities grew to be of a subversive nature, Government had no alternative but to take action on the Congressites one after another. One by one, they were imprisoned. But they were idolised by some people, worshipped as heroes, and spoken of as martyrs in the cause of the nation. Many newspapers even conferred on them high and astounding titles. Mr. V. Venkatappa of Channapatna was given the title of "Terror of the Administration" (ತುಳಿತುಕರ). When he was in jail, one Patel Lingegowda asked for leave just to help the Congress movement, and even before the leave was sanctioned, he sent all the connected records and accounts that he had to the Amildar through the *thoti* and then joined the movement. He actively preached a no-tax campaign along with others in certain villages. When the Sub-Division Officer arrived at Closepet, he could not conduct any *jamabandi*, because he was boycotted by the villagers.

Proceeding, the speaker felt that such of the village officers as desired to actively participate in the Congress movement would have done well if they had resigned their posts in advance. But they did not do that. They wanted to participate in the activities clinging to their office, because they knew full well that once they went out of office they could not get a living in the villages. By taking prompt action, the Government had prevented ugly developments taking place. He was of opinion that the action already taken was not enough and advocated more stringent action being taken, such as cancelling the entire family *hak* in all cases where shanbhogs and patels had either directly or indirectly participated in the Congress activities. He had no doubt that such a step would have a healthy effect on them. And it was necessary in the interests of the good relations that should subsist between the Government and the people,

Mr. K. N. PUTTANNA also complimented the Government on having taken steps to check the subversive activities of a handful of people going from village to village and disseminating all sorts of false news. He did not understand why shanbhogs and patels should participate in a movement of a political nature. He also did not understand why the supporters of the resolution and others of their way of thinking wanted to remove the restraints placed upon the village officers. The object of Government in issuing the circular was only to see that the village officers on whom rested the heavy and onerous duty of village administration did not identify themselves in party politics and join a movement which was definitely of a nature tending to subvert the law and order established in the State. The point to be considered was whether or not it was detrimental to the well-being of the State if shanbhogs and patels were permitted to identify themselves in Congress activities. There was no gainsaying the fact that they were all influential in the villages. Their word was law there. The object of the sponsors of the resolution in asking for the removal of the restrictions was to make shanbhogs and patels also members of the Congress organization. A certain section of the Press also was helping the Congress party in the dissemination of such news in villages. The villagers being generally illiterate and ignorant, were unable to sift the truth. The mere mention of the word "Congress" had a mesmeric effect on the minds of the villagers. They believed anything and everything said by the Congress people as the gospel truth. The Congress party had made profuse promises to the people such as that they would get the kadayam reduced, that they would strive at reducing the indebtedness of the raiyats, that they would provide for better water facilities, and in short, fight for the establishment of responsible government which would put an end to many of their ills. So under these false hopes, the people had joined the Congress movement. From the activities, it could not but be inferred that they were implanting in the minds of the

villagers ideas of disloyalty to the established Government. The speaker emphasized that such a state of affairs should not be tolerated by any Government for a moment; for, once such ideas took root in the minds of the people, it would be very difficult to obliterate them. In the interest of the State it was very essential that a check should be put to the Congress propaganda in villages which was being carried on with the help and connivance of the shanbhogs and patels. In this view, the action of Government in restricting the freedom of action of the village officers was highly commendable. Of course, the shanbhogs and patels had rights and privileges as other citizens. But at the same time, they had to realize that they were village officers entrusted with certain governmental duties and that they were expected not to behave in a manner prejudicial to the interests of the Government under which they worked. They could be kept on in their offices only so long as they did not act against the interests of the Government. The moment they disobeyed the orders of Government, it was but right that they should be removed from their offices and their family *hak* forfeited. In this view, he justified the issue of the circular in question.

Continuing, Mr. PUTTANNA said that the one argument of the Congressites with which they seemed to captivate the minds of the raiyats was that they were suffering from untold difficulties which the Government, if it had been benevolent and responsible to the people, would not have left unredressed. It was no doubt true that the raiyats were in difficulties: the rate of assessment was high; they were deeply indebted; there were no rains; their produce was not fetching adequate prices; and so on. It would be better therefore if the Government themselves took note of all the difficulties and undertook ameliorative measures to redress their hardships. If that was done, the speaker was sure that the Congress influence in villages would not gain any strength.

Mr. H. M. CHANNABASAPPA, in supporting the resolution, reminded the

Government that they themselves had stated two or three years ago that shanbhogs and patels were not direct subordinates of Government. The honorarium paid to them was only as a mark of recognition of the services that were being rendered by this class of officers from time immemorial. Such being the case, he did not think it was justifiable on the part of Government to remove their *hak* for participating in Congress activities, or, as had been the case, for applying for leave on the ground that due to mental depression they could not discharge their duties satisfactorily. He hoped that the members who had made vitriolic remarks against the Congress in the course of the discussion would withdraw their statements in view of the fact that the Government themselves had given recognition to the Congress as a political organization.

Mr. Y. V. MUNISWAMI IYER replied that he would under no circumstances withdraw what he had stated.

Continuing, Mr. CHANNABASAPPA said that he personally saw no harm in shanbhogs and patels becoming members of the Congress organization or taking part in its activities. The orders of the Revenue Commissioner in effect prevented them from expressing their grievances through a recognized organization. He was afraid that if the orders were continued, it might have a baneful effect on administration; because, non-officials would not be willing to serve on the various committees as members under restricted conditions. Also, the shanbhogs and patels might not be anxious to continue to serve as village officers when their civic rights and privileges were curtailed. The natural consequence of this would be that Government would have to appoint stipendiary men. But the speaker doubted whether that would be a practicable proposition, as it involved very heavy expenditure.

Mr. A. J. KHALEEL, in opposing the resolution, observed that it seemed to him that the supporters of the resolution were labouring under a misapprehension that these village officers would be deprived of all their civic rights. It was not at all so. The shanbhogs and

patels formed a limb of the Government and therefore it stood to reason that they should not take part in activities calculated to subvert the very Government under which they worked. Nobody objected to their owing allegiance to Congress. But they should do so after tendering resignations to their offices. They were the local barristers, philosophers and guides in villages. If these were kept under control, much of the mischief could be obviated. He was constrained to remark in this connection that some of the non-official organizations had become political clubs of late. It was therefore very necessary to have some control over these people.

Continuing, he said that it surprised him very much to see the inconsistencies in the arguments and attitude of the members belonging to the Congress group. They preached in the villages to the effect that at a time when it was difficult for the raiyats to pay kadayam, there was no meaning in Government spending lots of money on ornamental lights, etc., which were a mere luxury. But in the same breath they represented in the Assembly that they would like to have a radio station, etc., knowing well that the money for them should come from the raiyats. Of late, the activities of the Congress had increased to such an extent that hartals had become very common in the cities. Even in a city like Bangalore, there was no chance of the minority view prevailing. If the Mahomedans did not fall in with the views of the majority and close the shops, stone-throwing was being resorted to. Such being the case, it was easy to imagine the situation in mofussil parts where the Mahomedans formed the minority. As Congress activities were possible in the villages only through the instrumentality of the village officers, it was necessary that action should be taken by Government to discourage these officers from actively participating in such activities.

Mr. G. RAJAGOPALACHAR, in supporting the resolution, observed that the present was not the time for the members to cast unwarranted reflections on the Congress and its activities. The circular referred to was issued at a time

when the state of affairs had been different from what it was at present. After the mediation of Srijut Vallabhai Patel, the situation had changed for the better. And the Government themselves had recognized the Congress as a political organization, had given a status to it and had expressed the hope that a new era of progress and prosperity would begin. In view of the altered circumstances, he thought that if the Government were really sincere in their dealings with the Congress, it was but befitting that they should rescind the orders of suspension, dismissal, etc., passed against certain village officers. He appealed to Government to be very generous in the matter.

Mr. Anekal SRINIVASIENGAR asked whether it should be understood from the remark of the previous speaker that the shanbhogs and patels and the Congressmen had owned their mistake.

Mr. RAJAGOPALACHAR replied that what he said was that the Congressmen had not done any act of a subversive character. And even granting that their action was considered to have been subversive in the past, it should no more be treated as such in the future in view of the altered circumstances prevailing in the country.

Mr. S. MUNIVENKATAPPA said that with a view to enrol people in the rural parts as Congress members, the Congressmen were first trying to win over to their side the village officers who were very influential in villages. It was therefore necessary that the Government should treat the village officers as Government servants and prohibit their taking part in the Congress activities.

The REVENUE COMMISSIONER (Mr. K. V. Anantaraman), in replying to the resolution, observed that it was rather unfortunate that the discussion on the resolution should have been based on a matter not at all referred to in the circular under reference. In fact there was no mention even of the word "Congress" in it. This would be clear from a reading of the circular. (*He then read out the circular*). Government had reason to believe that some shanbhogs and patels had joined a movement which aimed at subverting

the Government. Though they might be considered as non-officials in one sense, it did not mean that the responsibility vested in them by Government in regard to village administration had ceased. They had no doubt certain rights and privileges as other citizens had. And they could even take part in academic discussions on political matters, but they should not participate actively or passively, directly or indirectly, in movements organized for political purposes. Because, if they did so, they were liable to the charge of being participants in action directed against established Government under whom they were serving and in attempts calculated to cause disturbance of public tranquillity in the State. Government could never allow shanbhogs and patels, so long as they were village officers, to take part in regular political activities. That was the reason why they were asked in the circular not to take part in those activities.

Secondly, it seemed to him that the discussion had gone on the presumption that the shanbhogs and patels were not Government servants. He entirely repudiated that statement. He said that they were Government servants so long as certain duties of Government had been entrusted to them. They had all the privileges, the rights and the disabilities as any other class of Government servants. There was only this difference that the restrictions placed on salaried officials were not applied *in toto* to this class of officers, for the reason that they had been enjoying the offices on a hereditary basis and were besides part-time servants. It could not be said that they were not at all Government servants.

Proceeding, he observed that it was a matter for gratification that out of a total of 20,000 odd shanbhogs and patels in the whole State, with the exception of 20 or 30, the rest had not mixed themselves with politics or tried to work against the interests of Government. He was extremely grateful to them for having stood by the Government. The trouble was only in about 2 or 3 taluks. At the meetings held in these taluks, Government were subjected

to vilification, and speeches bringing the Government into contempt were made. Reliable information had reached Government that shanbhogs and patels actively participated in such meetings. Government therefore thought that it was essential to put a stop to such activities on the part of these village officers. The patel was the policeman of the village, and on him rested the duty of giving information to the Government in regard to matters likely to create unrest in the minds of the public or disturbance to the tranquillity of the State. If the patel himself were to actively take part in political movements, the speaker asked how he could be expected to discharge governmental duties entrusted to and expected of him. The village officers formed the main pivot for carrying on the administration in the villages and so long as Government relied on them for the efficient carrying on of their administration, it was but reasonable that they should not take part in political movements which were often-times aimed at Government.

After all, the object of the circular was to caution village officers if they did not know their duties clearly enough. In fact some time ago, there was an occasion for the authorities concerned to administer such a caution. When a similar activity had been started then in another district, the speaker said that he himself sent for the patels of the taluk concerned and told them not to mix themselves with such activities as it was not proper for them to do so. The circular under discussion was issued to serve only the purpose of reminding them of their duties clearly.

Mr. Bhupalam CHANDRASEKHAR-AYYA said that the Revenue Commissioner's observations were more pleasing to hear than the remarks of the oppositionists to the resolution. The oppositionists thought that the Congress relied on the strength of shanbhogs and patels for the success of their objectives. But the speaker pointed out that it was not so. In fact, no shanbhog or patel had become an active member of the Congress. The

wide awakening in Mysore was but the echo of popular aspirations in the British Indian Provinces. And no amount of tirade against the Congress would check the surging wave of nationalism. It was a pity, he thought, that the oppositionists had not realized this hard fact.

It had often been said that generosity was the highest quality of a statesman. Lord Irwin earned the gratitude of many millions of Indians by his generous gesture at a psychological moment in bringing about a compromise between the Indian National Congress and the British Government. The speaker said that the present time required such generosity to be displayed by the Head of the Administration. When even the Congress leaders, who had been imprisoned for their alleged subversive activities, had been released from jails and were allowed to attend the meetings of the House, it was reasonable that Government should withdraw the circular, especially after the peace settlement, and reinstate the village officers concerned.

MR. KHAJI SYED YUSUFF SAHIB, in opposing the resolution, felt very sorry that the Congress, by misrepresenting facts, should have been creating grievances where none existed. On many an occasion, he had seen placards with the words 'Down with the Government' being displayed by the Congress members at several meetings. That was their stock in trade. He had also heard of most contemptuous references to Government being made in the course of several such meetings. But there was one solace in the midst of this—and it was a matter for gratification—that the generality of the people were not disloyal to His Highness the Maharaja. This was evident from the fact that wherever His Highness went, people thronged together in vast numbers just to have a *darshan* of their beloved Sovereign. It was only a handful of people who were causing a disturbance of the public peace, creating hatred between class and class by misrepresentations and raising false hopes and the like in the minds of men in rural parts. They

went on telling the villagers that their children had no facilities for primary education, that medical relief was not obtainable in rural parts, that the expenditure on the administration was top-heavy and that in spite of endeavours by their representatives in the constitutional bodies to reduce the top-heavy expenditure just to give relief to raiyats, the Government had turned a deaf ear to their requests and so the only course left for the people was to see that responsible government was established. By such activities, the Congress people had been instilling in the minds of the people a sort of contempt for the Government. The shanbhogs and patels, who were the officers of Government in villages, identified themselves with such activities. It was very necessary therefore that in the interests of good administration they should be kept under discipline. He commended the action of the authorities in this direction.

Referring to the statement made by one of the previous speakers that the Congress stood for establishing responsible government under the ægis of His Highness the Maharaja, he asked what necessity there was for changing the existing system of Government when His Highness the Maharaja was keenly interested in the welfare and advancement of his subjects. Everywhere in the world Mysore was being eulogised as a model State. He thought that the present move was intended only to create class hatred in the State and as such it should be discouraged.

MR. T. MARIYAPPA regretted that the oppositionists should have launched a tirade against the Congress without taking due note of the altered circumstances in the country. The members of the Congress party had not hesitated to commend the actions of Government where it was deserved and also to criticise them where such a course was called for, so that it should not be considered that their criticisms were partial. But unlike others it was not their policy to sing always in praise of the actions of the Government.

Coming to the subject under discussion, he said that it was unjust for

the Government to have punished the village officers for merely attending or arranging meetings connected with the Congress programme. The action of the Government would have been justified if the village officers had not discharged their official duties satisfactorily. Moreover, they had not been considered as salaried Government servants. This was evident from the fact that they were eligible for membership of district boards, village panchayats, municipalities and the Representative Assembly where they could criticize the actions of the Government. And it was likely that in the new era likely to dawn, the very same shanbhogs and patels might occupy ministerial chairs. He therefore appealed to the Government to withdraw the circular and thereby promote the good relationship between the Government and the people that was so well begun recently. He requested the Government not to believe the statement that with the help of shanbhogs and patels the Congress party was working to subvert the Government. After all, the Congress did not, and would not, rely on the strength of the village officers for the success of their programmes. He appealed to the Government to be generous enough to create an impression in the public mind that they were not insincere in issuing the order setting forth the terms of the compromise. The question under discussion, namely, the participation of shanbhogs and patels in Congress activities was one on which, after all, there might be honest differences of opinion between the Government and the people. It would be the height of statesmanship to see that for a mere difference of opinion, the village officers were not penalised.

Mr. S. C. MALLIAH observed that he was really surprised that there should have been so much discussion on a simple matter. He did not agree that the rights and privileges of the village officers had been curtailed or their freedom of action had been fettered by the issue of the circular. The position was something like this: a lawyer, who was also a member of the Assembly, could criticise the several acts of administra-

tion in the House, but when he practised before a court, he must be bound by the rules of the court and must be amenable to its discipline. In the same way, patels and shanbhogs who were members of the Assembly might criticise the acts of the administration in the House; but the moment they returned to their villages, they were more village officers than members of the Assembly, and as such they must be amenable to the discipline expected of them as village officers and should not engage themselves in activities savouring of contempt for law and order or against the established Government under which they were working.

In this connection, he mentioned that he too was one of those who would welcome the day when responsible government became an accomplished fact. But, whatever be the form of Government, it could not work properly if the village officers were not under strict discipline and did not discharge their duties by the Government. He was sorry that the discussion had proceeded on the basis of a circular issued by the Revenue Commissioner. A similar circular had been passed 2 or 3 years ago and no inconvenience had been felt by anybody so far. If therefore there should be such a loud protest now over it, he would leave the House to consider how the orders of the Amildars would be respected and acted upon.

Proceeding, he said now that an understanding had been arrived at between the Congress and the Government, and a new atmosphere had been created, it was desirable that every one should proceed to work to promote the good relations between the Government and the people. He therefore requested the mover not to press the resolution to division in the larger interests of the country.

Mr. T. L. GANGOJI RAO SALANKEY observed that every one, to whatever party he belonged, loved the Congress organization. In fact, the Dewan himself had a great admiration for that organization and that when the All-India Congress held its golden jubilee, he had taken a leading part in the function. On another occasion, in the

presence of the British Resident himself the Dewan had spoken in very high terms of the Congress and its constructive ideals under the wise and able guidance of Mahatma Gandhi. Not only that. The Dewan had even adopted in Mysore the constructive programme of the Congress in certain spheres. But, all members of the Congress were not as great as Mahatma Gandhi. Every one should work disinterestedly and for the good of the country without creating any commotion in the country. Law and order must be respected, whatever be the form of Government. In fact the Hon. the Premier of Madras, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, who had been the recipient of several tributes for his high administrative capacity, had said on one occasion that law and order must be maintained at all costs and that as one responsible for their maintenance, he could not abstain himself from the responsibility attached to him as the Minister in charge of law and order. So, whatever be the form of Government, certain disciplinary control must be exercised by Government over their officers. That was all, the speaker emphasized the intention of the circular of the Revenue Commissioner.

Above all, Government had appointed a committee to recommend what reforms should be introduced in the administration of the State. They had indicated a tendency to associate more and more people with the administration of the State. It was therefore very desirable that good relations so happily begun with the compromise should be further promoted. In these circumstances, he hoped that the mover would not press the resolution.

MR. C. N. NARASINGA RAO replying to the debate observed that he was startled in the beginning of the debate at the denunciations against the Congress. But, he was glad to find, as discussion developed and in the latter part of it, that such denunciations gave place gradually to appeals and sympathy for furtherance of good relations between the Government and the people in the larger interests of the State. He was particularly pleased at the statements made by the learned

Revenue Commissioner and Mr. S. C. Malliah. Of all the speeches made on the resolution, only theirs were marked throughout with restraint and betrayed no signs of anger. He regretted that he was not prepared to say the same thing in respect of the speeches of the other members. It appeared to him that they went on talking as though they were living in the 18th century. Their remarks did not therefore call for any reply from him. Fighting for responsible government did not mean, and could never mean, disloyalty to His Highness the Maharaja. In fact, the Congress had been asking for the grant of responsible government under the aegis of His Highness the Maharaja.

So far as patels and shanbhogs were concerned, they had done meritorious service in the past and were rendering such service even at present. They might have committed mistakes according to the view held by Government. But in the spirit of the compromise arrived at, it was but befitting that the past wrongs should be forgotten by either party and that they should work in a spirit of harmony. Government had, in declaring their policy in regard to the recognition of the Mysore State Congress as a political organization and cognate matters, stated that all political organizations in the State should have the fullest opportunity to make constructive proposals to the committee on Constitutional Reforms, and that the committee could discuss and even recommend any plan of responsible government under the aegis of His Highness the Maharaja. That meant that every member of the Congress had a right to take part in the deliberations for the evolving of responsible government. While conceding these points, Government, however, had not revoked their orders of punishment of the village officers. He said that that was a matter to be deplored. It was not the speaker's contention that there should be no sort of control over the village officers. In fact, he admitted that there must be control by Government over their officers to see that governmental work was carried on smoothly. But, at the same time, he

suggested that the village officers at least must have freedom of speech and thought. It was in this view, he said, he had brought forward the resolution.

In conclusion, he said that he had no objection to withdraw the resolution if the Government gave an assurance that the cases of shanbhogs and patels who had been punished would be considered sympathetically. After all, for holding an opinion, which they thought was right, they had been punished. In the year of grace 1938, it was a sad commentary that one should be punished for the mere convictions one held. He hoped that the Government would be pleased to give the assurance asked for.

THE FIRST MEMBER (Rajamantrapravina S. P. Rajagopalachari), in winding up the debate, said that the resolution had been discussed at great length and that the Revenue Commissioner had explained the viewpoint of Government. However, he wished to say a few words just to clear some doubts that might still be existing in the minds of the members.

In the first instance, he wished to point out to the members that the circular issued was not a new one but had been in force for a long time past. It enunciated a certain principle. The appointment of village officers carried with it certain implications. Certain governmental duties had been entrusted to them under the law and to the extent of discharging those duties they were Government servants. It was a matter of gratification for Government that they had been discharging their duties satisfactorily. They were not merely collectors of government revenue as some speakers had remarked, but were the eyes and the ears of Government. The patels were the policemen of the villages. It was their primary duty to report to the higher officers of Government immediately there was any disturbance in their villages. Such being the case if they were to identify themselves in political activities, he asked how governmental work could be carried on in the villages. They were not prevented from taking part in any and every kind of political activity. But where however, on account of their participation

in such activities, the governmental work was likely to suffer, or where a feeling of contempt to Government or a subversive feeling was likely to manifest itself, it was but incumbent on them to refrain themselves from taking part in such activities.

Proceeding, the speaker observed that some members had remarked that so long as shanbhogs and patels were eligible for membership of district boards, village panchayats and Representative Assembly, and they could take part in criticizing the acts of the administration, it did not stand to reason that any restriction should be placed on them to speak similarly outside these bodies. With reference to that he explained that the various bodies had been constituted under the statutes and their work was governed by rules; and the shanbhogs and patels who happened to be members of such bodies were there to help the Government in the carrying on of their work in those bodies. Under such circumstances, their taking part in the deliberations of those bodies could not be objected to.

As regards the Assembly, however, it was a separate matter. According to the rules that had existed originally, no Government servant, which term had included shanbhogs and patels also, was eligible for membership of the Assembly. But later on, that rule was relaxed and shanbhogs and patels were given an opportunity to become members of the House. The reason for making this exception was that the Government wanted to know what exactly was the non-official opinion in rural parts about various administrative matters. Shanbhogs and patels who were in daily touch with the people and had knowledge of men and matters in the rural parts, were considered to be the people best fitted to represent the grievances of the villagers. So they were made eligible to become members of the Assembly. But it could not be said definitely how long that exception would continue. As the House was aware, a committee had been appointed by Government to go into the question of further constitutional reforms. At present it was not

possible to predict what their recommendations would be. If they should recommend, for instance, that the powers and functions of the Assembly should be so enlarged as to change its very character, then the Government would have to examine afresh how far it would be advisable for them to permit the village officers to be members of this House and sit in judgment over the acts of the central administration.

Another argument that had been advanced was that when a new era of peace had just been established after clearing away the misunderstandings that had lately arisen and co-operation between the Government and the people was expected, it was but befitting that the action taken against the village officers should be rescinded. The speaker said that the Government had recognized the Congress party as a political organization and would be respecting its views so long as they considered the party to be useful to the country. Similarly, it was likely that some other party might come into being and Government might have to recognize it also, as they had recognized the Congress party, so long as that new party also proved to be useful to the country. But recognition of the Congress party or for the matter of that any other party which might come into existence had nothing to do with the relationship between the Government and the village officers who were their servants. Therefore, there was no reason for the members to object to the issue of the circular or ask for its withdrawal. It was an order passed by the Revenue Commissioner purely in the interest of discipline over a class of Government servants.

With reference to the appeals made by the mover of the resolution and others for generosity to be shown by Government and for cancellation of the punishments meted out to the concerned village officers, the speaker assured them that Government were not lacking in generosity. Perhaps the members were not aware of the real circumstances which had called for such action on the part of the Revenue Commissioner. It was not so simple a matter as was sought

to be made out. If it had been such a trivial matter, he assured the House that Government would not have taken the action that they did. One of the patels (Patel of Channapatna) asked for leave on the ground that his friend was incarcerated in the jail, as a result of which his mind was not well and therefore he was unable to discharge his duties satisfactorily. The speaker did not believe that any one would ask for leave simply because his mind was disturbed. But there were other things behind his asking for leave. Government had received reports which established beyond the shadow of doubt that the Patel asked for leave just to take part in the no-tax campaign and other subversive activities. So the Revenue Commissioner had to take the action to deal with him severely.

Some members had pointed out that political prisoners had been let off after the compromise and the punishments meted out to the village officers also must be cancelled in the spirit of the compromise. His reply to that argument was that there was a lot of difference between these two sets of people. Whereas the former were non-officials and politicians, the latter were Government servants. In this connection, he emphasized the point that political parties in the State should avoid interfering with the relationship between the Government and their subordinates. It was purely as a matter of disciplinary control over the village officers that the circular was passed, so that the governmental work might not suffer. Moreover, if their work suffered, the public themselves would be put to a lot of difficulty. The question should be viewed not from the standpoint of a temporary advantage however welcome it might be, but in the larger interests of the State.

With regard to the assurance asked for by the mover of the resolution that the cases of punishment should be sympathetically examined, the speaker said that if these village officers in question individually approached the Deputy Commissioner concerned and apologised to him for their past conduct and also undertook to be of good behaviour in

future, necessary steps would be taken by the authority concerned to reconsider their cases. The speaker hoped that after this explanation, the mover would withdraw his resolution.

Mr. C. N. NARASINGA RAO enquired whether Government would consider the cases of the village officers sympathetically.

Mr. S. P. RAJAGOPALACHARI replied that sympathy would be shown to them only if they approached the authorities concerned with a proper frame of mind as had already been stated.

Mr. C. N. NARASINGA RAO again asked for an assurance whether the Government would examine the cases sympathetically.

Mr. S. P. RAJAGOPALACHARI replied that he was sorry he could not give such an unqualified assurance.

Thereupon the resolution was pressed to a division and carried, 65 voting in favour and 62 against.

PRESIDENT'S CONCLUDING REMARKS.

Mr. C. K. VENKATARAMAIA, Kannada Translator to Government, then read the Kannada version of the President's Concluding Remarks which were as follows:—

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN OF THE REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY,

We have had another very interesting session, and I think we are all entitled to a rest from our labours, more especially my two colleagues and the Secretaries to Government who have been responsible for an unusually heavy crop of legislation. If we have not passed all the bills that they have so laboriously drafted, we have at least had a very full discussion of them, and have now the advantage of a much better knowledge of one another's point of view in respect of many matters.

I will freely confess that some of the points of view to which expression has been given have been quite novel to me. I least expected that, in a body which has shown so much zeal for the improvement of the condition of the raiyat, we

should have encountered strenuous opposition to a bill to facilitate the development of a new industry out of which he can derive much profit. In other countries, which have developed world-wide trade in their products through insistence on quality, it has generally been the cultivators and traders themselves who have urged the governments to adopt the necessary legislation, while here it appears to be regarded by some among us as an example of undesirable autocracy that we should take steps to enable the raiyats to prosper.

The treatment accorded to the bill dealing with Public Parks was likewise a surprise to me. We on the Government side are proud of our parks as places for rest and recreation, and we want to have them kept clean and orderly. It was a new point of view to me that they are regarded as places of political assembly, or that listening to political speeches came within the category of rest and recreation. However, we are anxious to meet the views of the Assembly even in this matter, and will shortly bring before you a fresh draft which we hope will achieve our object without giving rise to any apprehensions on your part.

As regards control of the press, I should like to say for my colleagues and myself that we fully recognize the value of the fourth estate as an educative agency and as an agency for the formation of policy. But we also recognize that every man who sets himself up to teach his fellows incurs by so doing certain grave obligations, and it is incumbent upon any government that is worth the name to see, so far as is possible, that these obligations are observed. That this is a matter of the greatest possible difficulty will be obvious if we look at the newspapers of Europe, which present the opposite extremes of complete government control and a total lack of control of any sort. Sir R. W. Livingstone in a recent book reminded the world of the saying that "Barbarism is the absence of standards to which appeal can be made," and added "if we judge by our films, advertisements and cheap press, we are

living in an age of barbarism." Sir Josiah Stamp, looking at the matter from another point of view, writes of the "tyranny of print" and adds that the price of liberty is eternal vigilance.

It is a matter of the extreme difficulty to strike the happy mean between this barbarism and that tyranny. In the endeavour we have made, we have given you a bill which was drafted in accordance with the suggestions of some among you in order to bring us, in respect of the law relating to the matter, into line with British India. You now object to that and ask us to withdraw it altogether, but you have not suggested any alternative except a complete absence of law on the subject. We are unwilling to abandon the attempt to get into line with British India, and to meet the views, at any rate, of a certain number of those present here. We, therefore, propose to place the bill before the Legislative Council, and if they decide to refer it to a Select Committee, to see if we cannot discover there that happy mean to which I have referred.

The newspaper has been defined as an institution developed by modern civilization to present the news of the day, to foster commerce and industry, to inform and mould public opinion, and to furnish that check upon government which no constitution has ever been able to provide.

The more our newspapers conform to that definition the more influential they will become, the less need there will be for any control of the press, and the happier the country.

When you take stock of the general conditions in our State I would suggest that you compare them with the conditions elsewhere in India. Then you will realize how much better off we are here in Mysore.

Some of you have been good enough to make very generous references to myself. To you I can give at least this assurance in return. As the chief servant of His Highness the Maharaja and his people it will be my constant endeavour, as it will be my earnest prayer, to do all that lies in my power to further your interests and to see you rise higher and higher in the estimation of the world—in political status and in social and economic conditions.

There is little else I think which it is necessary for me to comment on today. We are looking to the skies for the falling of a gentle and fertilizing rain, and I hope that the months to come will bring us that peace and abundance, which I am sure is the aim and object of us all.

With three Cheers to His Highness the Maharaja, the House adjourned sine die at 1-5 p.m.

BANGALORE,

Dated 7th September 1938. }

A. SUNDARARAJA RAO,

Secretary, Mysore Representative Assembly.